

Workforce changes

Workforces are becoming more diverse, and people are staying in work longer. Combined with technological changes new business models and employment conditions are creating new forms and styles of working. In some cases this can consolidate more power in the employers, but in other cases demand for talented employees is shifting the power balance towards them. Workforce changes will affect the demand and supply of sport and recreation services

What we're seeing

Four factors driving change

The workforce is changing due to several interacting trends. **Demographic trends** are leading to workplaces with relatively fewer middle-aged workers and more older ones, and greater ethnic and gender diversity. **Digital technologies** continue to change the nature of work, and the skills required. This in turn is leading to **new business models** (such as Uber). The workforce is now more fluid too, with **multiple job and career changes** in the working life becoming normal.¹

NZ workforce is 'growing & greying'

New Zealand's labour force is growing, but the rate of growth is slowing. Stats NZ forecasts that people over 65 will increase from around 6% of the workforce currently, to 11% by 2060.²

Myths about generational differences

Intergenerational differences in attitudes and expectations in the workplace make good headlines and demand for HR services. But there's no evidence to support that narrative. 'Boomers' and 'subsequent generations usually share similar priorities and motivating factors.'³

The 'Great resignation'

Exceptionally high rates of resignations are occurring as the Covid pandemic progresses. Low pay, a lack of opportunities, and feeling disrespected at work are often key factors behind the resignations.⁴ In the not-for-profit sector, lower pay is not now being balanced by passion for the work, so staff are leaving for better paying work in the private sector.⁵

Shorter or more flexible work

Four day working weeks are being trialled in more, largely, white-collar businesses. Earlier trials have found productivity can often be maintained to ensure salaries are not reduced.⁶ Gig-type work is spreading across many sectors, and the number of gig-workers (freelancers, consultants, outsourced workers) is growing globally.⁷

NZ productivity still lags

NZ remains a relatively low wage and lower productivity economy compared to many OECD countries. The Productivity Commission noted that technology adoption here needs to improve, and employment laws need to change to encourage 'gig' work. Skill levels at schools also need to rise, and better access to short courses for workers will help improve skills and opportunities.⁸

Potential implications

Create

- Working conditions and opportunities that attract talented workers

Relate

- Power balance shifts in employer – employee relationships

Consume

- Spread of demand for after work activities and services across the week
- Central city retail businesses may become less sustainable if flexible working continues

Degrade

- Traditional work days and work rhythms become less common
- NZ's prosperity and desirability as a place to work at risk if productivity stalls

Connect

- Sport & recreation offerings will need to change to appeal to more flexible workers
- New workplace dynamics emerge

Define

- Meaning of a career evolves
- New perspectives of work take hold

More information (links)

¹ [Future of the workforce](#)

² [Labour force projected to grow and grey](#)

³ [Myth busting assumptions about age in the workforce](#)

⁴ [Low pay, no opportunities, & disrespect behind rise in resignations](#)

⁵ [Here for good? Not for profit sector report 2022](#)

⁶ [Thousands of UK workers begin world's biggest trial of four-day week](#)

⁷ [Will the gig economy become the new working-class norm?](#)

⁸ [Technology and the future of work](#)